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(21) International Application Number: PCT/DK98/00067 (22) International Filing Date: 20 February 1998 (20.02.98) (30) Priority Data: 0221/97 28 February 1997 (28.02.97) DK (71) Applicant: NOVO NORDISK A/S [DK/DK]; Novo Allé, DK-2880 Bagsværd (DK). (72) Inventor: SVENDSEN, Allan; Bakkeledet 28, DK-3460 Birkerød (DK). (74) Common Representative: NOVO NORDISK A/S; Corporate Patents, Novo Allé, DK-2880 Bagsværd (DK).		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, GH, GM, GW, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i>
(54) Title: LACCASE MUTANTS (57) Abstract The present invention relates to laccase mutants with increased oxidation potential and/or changed pH optimum and/or altered mediator pathway and/or altered O ₂ /OH ⁻ pathway.		

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LACCASE MUTANTS**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

5 The present invention relates to laccase mutants with increased oxidation potential and/or changed pH optimum and/or altered mediator pathway and/or altered O_2/OH^- pathway.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Laccase is a polyphenol oxidase (EC 1.10.3.2) which catalyses the oxidation of a variety of inorganic and aromatic compounds, particularly phenols, with the concomitant reduction of molecular oxygen to water.

15 Laccase belongs to a family of blue copper-containing oxidases which includes ascorbate oxidase and the mammalian plasma protein ceruloplasmin. All these enzymes are multi-copper-containing proteins.

20 Because laccases are able to catalyze the oxidation of a variety of inorganic and aromatic compounds, laccases have been suggested in many potential industrial applications such as lignin modification, paper strengthening, dye transfer inhibition in detergents, phenol polymerization, hair colouring, and waste water treatment.

25 The various applications ask for laccases with specific properties. It is the purpose of the present application to create laccase variants with increased oxidation potential and/or changed pH optimum and/or altered mediator pathway and/or altered O_2/OH^- pathway.

30

BRIEF DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to laccase variants, in particular to

35 - A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase activity, and increased oxidation potential and comprises a mutation in a position corresponding to at least one of the following positions:

G511A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
T428A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
S510A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
D106A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
5 N109A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W,Q;
L500I,F,Y,W;
A108V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
G514A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;

wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in
10 SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence
which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1;

- A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase
activity and an altered pH optimum and comprises a mutation in a
15 position corresponding to at least one of the following
positions:

192-193;
234-236;
269;
20 293-294;
364-365;
372-373;
426-433;
503-513;

25 wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in
SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence
which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1;

- A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase
30 activity and an altered mediator efficiency and comprises a
mutation in a position corresponding to at least one of the
following positions:

185-194;
235;
35 293-294;
365-373;
427-429;

505;

507-508;

510-511;

wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in
5 SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence
which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1; and

- A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase
activity and an altered O₂/OH⁻-pathway and comprises a mutation in
10 a position corresponding to at least one of the following
positions:

A506E;

N109D;

H93E;

15 H95E;

M433E;

M480E;

wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in
SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence
20 which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1.

In still further aspects the invention relates to DNA
encoding such variants and methods of preparing the variants.

Finally, the invention relates to the use of the variants for
25 various industrial purposes.

DETAILED DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

Homologous Laccases

30 A number of laccases produced by different fungi are
homologous on the amino acid level. For instance, when using the
homology percent obtained from UWGCG program using the GAP
program with the default parameters (penalties: gap weight=3.0,
length weight=0.1; WISCONSIN PACKAGE Version 8.1-UNIX, August
35 1995, Genetics Computer Group, 575 Science Drive, Madison,
Wisconsin, USA 53711) the following homology was found:

Myceliophthora thermophila laccase comprising the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID No. 1: 100%;

Scytalidium thermophilum laccase comprising the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID No. 2: 81.2%.

5 Because of the homology found between the above mentioned laccases, they are considered to belong to the same class of laccases, namely the class of "Myceliophthora-like laccases".

Accordingly, in the present context, the term "Myceliophthora-like laccase" is intended to indicate a laccase
10 which, on the amino acid level, displays a homology of at least 80% to the *Myceliophthora* laccase SEQ ID NO 1, or a laccase which, on the amino acid level, displays a homology of at least 85% to the *Myceliophthora* laccase SEQ ID NO 1, or a laccase which, on the amino acid level, displays a homology of at least
15 90% to the *Myceliophthora* laccase SEQ ID NO 1, or a laccase which, on the amino acid level, displays a homology of at least 95% to the *Myceliophthora* laccase SEQ ID NO 1, or a laccase which, on the amino acid level, displays a homology of at least 98% to the *Myceliophthora* laccase SEQ ID NO 1.

20 In the present context, "derived from" is intended not only to indicate a laccase produced or producible by a strain of the organism in question, but also a laccase encoded by a DNA sequence isolated from such strain and produced in a host organism containing said DNA sequence. Finally, the term is
25 intended to indicate a laccase which is encoded by a DNA sequence of synthetic and/or cDNA origin and which has the identifying characteristics of the laccase in question.

30 Variants with altered oxidation potential

The redox potentials of various wild type laccases have been found to be the following (measured at pH 5.3):

E°, V vs NHE

Myceliophthora thermophila (SEQ ID No. 1): 0.48

35 *Scytalidium thermophilum* (SEQ ID No. 2): 0.53

It is contemplated that it is possible to increase the oxidation potential of a parent laccase, wherein said variant is the result of a mutation, i.e. one or more amino acid residues have been deleted from, replaced or added to the parent laccase. Preferred positions for mutations are the following:

Myceliophthora thermophila laccase (SEQ ID No. 1):

G511A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
10 T428A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
S510A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
D106A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
N109A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W,Q;
L500I,F,Y,W;
15 A108V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
G514A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W; in particular
G511A,V,L,I,F;
T428V;
S510V;
20 D106L;
N109I,F,Q;
L500F;
A108V,I;
G514A,V,L,I,F.

25 Preferred variants include any combination of the above mentioned mutations.

Variants with altered pH optimum

30 The desired pH optimum of a laccase depends on which application is of interest, e.g., if the laccase is to be used for denim bleaching the preferred pH optimum will be around pH 5-8, whereas if the laccase is to be used for washing purposes the preferred pH optimum will be around pH 8-10.

35 It is contemplated that it is possible to alter the pH optimum of a parent laccase wherein said variant is the result of a mutation, i.e. one or more amino acid residues have been deleted from, replaced or added to the parent laccase. Preferred

positions for mutations are the following:

Myceliophthora thermophila (SEQ ID No. 1):

192-193;

5 234-236;

269;

293-294;

364-365;

372-373;

10 426-433;

503-513.

Preferred substitutions are the following: E, D, L, I, F, Y, W.

15 Variants with altered mediator efficiency

Laccases are often used in combination with so called mediators or enhancers, e.g., in combination with phenothiazine or phenothiazine related compounds (see WO 95/01426) or in combination with acetosyringone or acetosyringone related compounds (see WO 96/10079).

It is contemplated that it is possible to alter the mediator efficiency (in order to make the mediator more efficient), of a parent laccase wherein said variant is the result of a mutation, i.e. one or more amino acid residues have been deleted from, replaced or added to the parent laccase. Preferred positions for mutations are the following:

Myceliophthora thermophila laccase (SEQ ID No. 1):

185-194;

30 235;

293-294;

365-373;

427-429;

505;

35 507-508;

510-511.

Preferred substitutions are in particular one or more of the

following mutations:

N189G, A, S, T;

S190G, A;

F371* (deletion);

5 F371G, A.

Variants with altered O₂/OH-pathway

10 It is contemplated that it is possible to lower the possibility of OH[•] entering the trinuclear Cu site by producing one or more of the following mutations:

Myceliophthora thermophila (SEQ ID No. 1):

A506E;

15 N109D;

H93E;

H95E;

M433E;

M480E.

20

Methods of preparing laccase variants

Several methods for introducing mutations into genes are known in the art. After a brief discussion of the cloning of laccase-encoding DNA sequences, methods for generating mutations
25 at specific sites within the laccase-encoding sequence will be discussed.

Cloning a DNA sequence encoding a laccase

The DNA sequence encoding a parent laccase may be isolated from any cell or microorganism producing the laccase in question, using various methods well known in the art. First, a genomic DNA
5 and/or cDNA library should be constructed using chromosomal DNA or messenger RNA from the organism that produces the laccase to be studied. Then, if the amino acid sequence of the laccase is known, homologous, labelled oligonucleotide probes may be synthesized and used to identify laccase-encoding clones from a
10 genomic library prepared from the organism in question. Alternatively, a labelled oligonucleotide probe containing sequences homologous to a known laccase gene could be used as a probe to identify laccase-encoding clones, using hybridization and washing conditions of lower stringency.

15 A method for identifying laccase-encoding clones involves inserting cDNA into an expression vector, such as a plasmid, transforming laccase-negative fungi with the resulting cDNA library, and then plating the transformed fungi onto agar containing a substrate for laccase, thereby allowing clones
20 expressing the laccase to be identified.

Alternatively, the DNA sequence encoding the enzyme may be prepared synthetically by established standard methods, e.g. the phosphoroamidite method. In the phosphoroamidite method, oligonucleotides are synthesized, e.g. in an automatic DNA synthesizer,
25 purified, annealed, ligated and cloned in appropriate vectors.

Finally, the DNA sequence may be of mixed genomic and synthetic origin, mixed synthetic and cDNA origin or mixed genomic and cDNA origin, prepared by ligating fragments of synthetic, genomic or cDNA origin (as appropriate, the fragments corresponding to
30 various parts of the entire DNA sequence), in accordance with standard techniques. The DNA sequence may also be prepared by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) using specific primers.

Site-directed mutagenesis

Once a laccase-encoding DNA sequence has been isolated, and desirable sites for mutation identified, mutations may be introduced using synthetic oligonucleotides. These oligonucleotides
5 contain nucleotide sequences flanking the desired mutation sites; mutant nucleotides are inserted during oligonucleotide synthesis. In a specific method, a single-stranded gap of DNA, bridging the laccase-encoding sequence, is created in a vector carrying the laccase gene. Then the synthetic nucleotide, bearing the desired
10 mutation, is annealed to a homologous portion of the single-stranded DNA. The remaining gap is then filled in with T7 DNA polymerase and the construct is ligated using T4 ligase. A specific example of this method is described in Morinaga et al. (1984). US 4,760,025 discloses the introduction of oligonucleotides
15 encoding multiple mutations by performing minor alterations of the cassette. However, an even greater variety of mutations can be introduced at any one time by the Morinaga method, because a multitude of oligonucleotides, of various lengths, can be introduced.

20 Another method of introducing mutations into laccase-encoding DNA sequences is described in Nelson and Long (1989). It involves the 3-step generation of a PCR fragment containing the desired mutation introduced by using a chemically synthesized DNA strand as one of the primers in the PCR reactions. From the PCR-generated
25 fragment, a DNA fragment carrying the mutation may be isolated by cleavage with restriction endonucleases and reinserted into an expression plasmid.

Random mutagenesis

30 The random mutagenesis of a DNA sequence encoding a parent laccase may conveniently be performed by use of any method known in the art.

For instance, the random mutagenesis may be performed by use of a suitable physical or chemical mutagenizing agent, by use of
35 a suitable oligonucleotide, or by subjecting the DNA sequence to PCR generated mutagenesis. Furthermore, the random mutagenesis may be performed by use of any combination of these mutagenizing

agents.

The mutagenizing agent may, e.g., be one which induces transitions, transversions, inversions, scrambling, deletions, and/or insertions.

5 Examples of a physical or chemical mutagenizing agent suitable for the present purpose include ultraviolet (UV) irradiation, hydroxylamine, N-methyl-N'-nitro-N-nitrosoguanidine (MNNG), O-methyl hydroxylamine, nitrous acid, ethyl methane sulphonate (EMS), sodium bisulphite, formic acid, and nucleotide
10 analogues.

When such agents are used, the mutagenesis is typically performed by incubating the DNA sequence encoding the parent enzyme to be mutagenized in the presence of the mutagenizing agent of choice under suitable conditions for the mutagenesis to take
15 place, and selecting for mutated DNA having the desired properties.

When the mutagenesis is performed by the use of an oligonucleotide, the oligonucleotide may be doped or spiked with the three non-parent nucleotides during the synthesis of the
20 oligonucleotide at the positions which are to be changed. The doping or spiking may be done so that codons for unwanted amino acids are avoided. The doped or spiked oligonucleotide can be incorporated into the DNA encoding the laccase enzyme by any published technique, using e.g. PCR, LCR or any DNA polymerase
25 and ligase.

When PCR-generated mutagenesis is used, either a chemically treated or non-treated gene encoding a parent laccase enzyme is subjected to PCR under conditions that increase the misincorporation of nucleotides (Deshler 1992; Leung et al.,
30 Technique, Vol.1, 1989, pp. 11-15).

A mutator strain of *E. coli* (Fowler et al., Molec. Gen. Genet., 133, 1974, pp. 179-191), *S. cerevisiae* or any other microbial organism may be used for the random mutagenesis of the DNA encoding the laccase enzyme by e.g. transforming a plasmid
35 containing the parent enzyme into the mutator strain, growing the mutator strain with the plasmid and isolating the mutated plasmid from the mutator strain. The mutated plasmid may subsequently be

transformed into the expression organism.

The DNA sequence to be mutagenized may conveniently be present in a genomic or cDNA library prepared from an organism expressing the parent laccase enzyme. Alternatively, the DNA sequence may be present on a suitable vector such as a plasmid or a bacteriophage, which as such may be incubated with or otherwise exposed to the mutagenizing agent. The DNA to be mutagenized may also be present in a host cell either by being integrated in the genome of said cell or by being present on a vector harboured in the cell. Finally, the DNA to be mutagenized may be in isolated form. It will be understood that the DNA sequence to be subjected to random mutagenesis is preferably a cDNA or a genomic DNA sequence.

In some cases it may be convenient to amplify the mutated DNA sequence prior to the expression step or the screening step being performed. Such amplification may be performed in accordance with methods known in the art, the presently preferred method being PCR-generated amplification using oligonucleotide primers prepared on the basis of the DNA or amino acid sequence of the parent enzyme.

Subsequent to the incubation with or exposure to the mutagenizing agent, the mutated DNA is expressed by culturing a suitable host cell carrying the DNA sequence under conditions allowing expression to take place. The host cell used for this purpose may be one which has been transformed with the mutated DNA sequence, optionally present on a vector, or one which was carried the DNA sequence encoding the parent enzyme during the mutagenesis treatment. Examples of suitable host cells are fungal hosts such as *Aspergillus niger* or *Aspergillus oryzae*.

The mutated DNA sequence may further comprise a DNA sequence encoding functions permitting expression of the mutated DNA sequence.

35 Localized random mutagenesis

The random mutagenesis may advantageously be localized to a part of the parent laccase in question. This may, e.g., be

advantageous when certain regions of the enzyme have been identified to be of particular importance for a given property of the enzyme, and when modified are expected to result in a variant having improved properties. Such regions may normally be identified when the tertiary structure of the parent enzyme has been elucidated and related to the function of the enzyme.

The localized random mutagenesis is conveniently performed by use of PCR-generated mutagenesis techniques as described above or any other suitable technique known in the art.

Alternatively, the DNA sequence encoding the part of the DNA sequence to be modified may be isolated, e.g. by being inserted into a suitable vector, and said part may subsequently be subjected to mutagenesis by use of any of the mutagenesis methods discussed above.

With respect to the screening step in the above-mentioned method of the invention, this may conveniently be performed by use of aa filter assay based on the following principle:

A microorganism capable of expressing the mutated laccase enzyme of interest is incubated on a suitable medium and under suitable conditions for the enzyme to be secreted, the medium being provided with a double filter comprising a first protein-binding filter and on top of that a second filter exhibiting a low protein binding capability. The microorganism is located on the second filter. Subsequent to the incubation, the first filter comprising enzymes secreted from the microorganisms is separated from the second filter comprising the microorganisms. The first filter is subjected to screening for the desired enzymatic activity and the corresponding microbial colonies present on the second filter are identified.

The filter used for binding the enzymatic activity may be any protein binding filter e.g. nylon or nitrocellulose. The top filter carrying the colonies of the expression organism may be any filter that has no or low affinity for binding proteins e.g. cellulose acetate or Durapore™. The filter may be pretreated with any of the conditions to be used for screening, or may be treated during the detection of enzymatic activity.

The enzymatic activity may be detected by a dye,

fluorescence, precipitation, pH indicator, IR-absorbance or any other known technique for detection of enzymatic activity.

The detecting compound may be immobilized by any immobilizing agent, e.g., agarose, agar, gelatine, polyacrylamide, starch, filter paper, cloth; or any combination of immobilizing agents.

Laccase activity

In the context of this invention, the laccase activity was measured using 10-(2-hydroxyethyl)-phenoxazine (HEPO) as substrate for the various laccases. HEPO was synthesized using the same procedure as described for 10-(2-hydroxyethyl)-phenothiazine, (G. Cauquil in Bulletin de la Society Chimique de France, 1960, p. 1049). In the presence of oxygen laccases (E.C. 1.10.3.2) oxidize HEPO to a HEPO radical that can be monitored photometrically at 528 nm.

The *Myceliophthora thermophila* laccase was measured using 0.4 mM HEPO in 25 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.5, 0.05% TWEEN-20 at 30 °C. The absorbance at 528 nm was followed for 200 s and the rate calculated from the linear part of the progress curve.

Expression of laccase variants

According to the invention, a DNA sequence encoding the variant produced by methods described above, or by any alternative methods known in the art, can be expressed, in enzyme form, using an expression vector which typically includes control sequences encoding a promoter, operator, ribosome binding site, translation initiation signal, and, optionally, a repressor gene or various activator genes.

The recombinant expression vector carrying the DNA sequence encoding a laccase variant of the invention may be any vector which may conveniently be subjected to recombinant DNA procedures, and the choice of vector will often depend on the host cell into which it is to be introduced. Thus, the vector may be an autonomously replicating vector, i.e. a vector which exists as an extrachromosomal entity, the replication of which is independent of chromosomal replication, e.g. a plasmid, a

bacteriophage or an extrachromosomal element, minichromosome or an artificial chromosome. Alternatively, the vector may be one which, when introduced into a host cell, is integrated into the host cell genome and replicated together with the chromosome(s) into which it has been integrated.

In the vector, the DNA sequence should be operably connected to a suitable promoter sequence. The promoter may be any DNA sequence which shows transcriptional activity in the host cell of choice and may be derived from genes encoding proteins either homologous or heterologous to the host cell. Examples of suitable promoters for directing the transcription of the DNA sequence encoding a laccase variant of the invention, especially in a fungal host, are those derived from the gene encoding *A. oryzae* TAKA amylase, *Rhizomucor miehei* aspartic proteinase, *A. niger* neutral α -amylase, *A. niger* acid stable α -amylase, *A. niger* glucoamylase, *Rhizomucor miehei* lipase, *A. oryzae* alkaline protease, *A. oryzae* triose phosphate isomerase or *A. nidulans* acetamidase.

The expression vector of the invention may also comprise a suitable transcription terminator and, in eukaryotes, polyadenylation sequences operably connected to the DNA sequence encoding the laccase variant of the invention. Termination and polyadenylation sequences may suitably be derived from the same sources as the promoter.

The vector may further comprise a DNA sequence enabling the vector to replicate in the host cell in question. Examples of such sequences are the origins of replication of plasmids pUC19, pACYC177, pUB110, pE194, pAMB1 and pIJ702.

The vector may also comprise a selectable marker, e.g. a gene, the product of which complements a defect in the host cell, such as one which confers antibiotic resistance such as ampicillin, kanamycin, chloramphenicol or tetracyclin resistance. Furthermore, the vector may comprise *Aspergillus* selection markers such as *amdS*, *argB*, *niaD* and *sC*, a marker giving rise to hygromycin resistance, or the selection may be accomplished by co-transformation, e.g. as described in WO 91/17243.

The procedures used to ligate the DNA construct of the inven-

tion encoding a laccase variant, the promoter, terminator and other elements, respectively, and to insert them into suitable vectors containing the information necessary for replication, are well known to persons skilled in the art (cf., for instance, 5 Sambrook et al. (1989)).

The cell of the invention, either comprising a DNA construct or an expression vector of the invention as defined above, is advantageously used as a host cell in the recombinant production of a laccase variant of the invention. The cell may be 10 transformed with the DNA construct of the invention encoding the variant, conveniently by integrating the DNA construct (in one or more copies) in the host chromosome. This integration is generally considered to be an advantage as the DNA sequence is more likely to be stably maintained in the cell. Integration of 15 the DNA constructs into the host chromosome may be performed according to conventional methods, e.g. by homologous or heterologous recombination. Alternatively, the cell may be transformed with an expression vector as described above in connection with the different types of host cells.

20 The cell of the invention may be a cell of a higher organism such as a mammal or an insect, but is preferably a microbial cell, e.g. a fungal cell.

The filamentous fungus may advantageously belong to a species of *Aspergillus*, e.g. *Aspergillus oryzae* or *Aspergillus niger*. 25 Fungal cells may be transformed by a process involving protoplast formation and transformation of the protoplasts followed by regeneration of the cell wall in a manner known *per se*. A suitable procedure for transformation of *Aspergillus* host cells is described in EP 238 023.

30 In a yet further aspect, the present invention relates to a method of producing a laccase variant of the invention, which method comprises cultivating a host cell as described above under conditions conducive to the production of the variant and recovering the variant from the cells and/or culture medium.

35 The medium used to cultivate the cells may be any conventional medium suitable for growing the host cell in question and obtaining expression of the laccase variant of the invention.

Suitable media are available from commercial suppliers or may be prepared according to published recipes (e.g. as described in catalogues of the American Type Culture Collection).

5 The laccase variant secreted from the host cells may conveniently be recovered from the culture medium by well-known procedures, including separating the cells from the medium by centrifugation or filtration, and precipitating proteinaceous components of the medium by means of a salt such as ammonium sulphate, followed by the use of chromatographic procedures such
10 as ion exchange chromatography, affinity chromatography, or the like.

Industrial Applications

15 The laccase variants of this invention possesses valuable properties allowing for various industrial applications, in particular lignin modification, paper strengthening, dye transfer inhibition in detergents, phenol polymerization, hair dyeing, textile dyeing, bleaching of textiles (in particular bleaching of denim as described in WO 96/12845 and WO 96/12846) and waste
20 water treatment.

SEQUENCE LISTING

(1) GENERAL INFORMATION:

(i) APPLICANT:

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(ii) TITLE OF INVENTION: LACCASE MUTANTS

(iii) NUMBER OF SEQUENCES: 2

(iv) COMPUTER READABLE FORM:

- (A) MEDIUM TYPE: Floppy disk
- (B) COMPUTER: IBM PC compatible
- (C) OPERATING SYSTEM: PC-DOS/MS-DOS
- (D) SOFTWARE: PatentIn Release #1.0, Version #1.30 (EPO)

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO: 1:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- (A) LENGTH: 573 amino acids
- (B) TYPE: amino acid
- (C) STRANDEDNESS: single
- (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

(ii) MOLECULE TYPE: protein

(xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO: 1:

Gln Gln Ser Cys Asn Thr Pro Ser Asn Arg Ala Cys Trp Thr Asp Gly
1 5 10 15

Tyr Asp Ile Asn Thr Asp Tyr Glu Val Asp Ser Pro Asp Thr Gly Val

18

20

25

30

Val Arg Pro Tyr Thr Leu Thr Leu Thr Glu Val Asp Asn Trp Thr Gly
35 40 45

5

Pro Asp Gly Val Val Lys Glu Lys Val Met Leu Val Asn Asn Ser Ile
50 55 60

10

Ile Gly Pro Thr Ile Phe Ala Asp Trp Gly Asp Thr Ile Gln Val Thr
65 70 75 80

Val Ile Asn Asn Leu Glu Thr Asn Gly Thr Ser Ile His Trp His Gly
85 90 95

15

Leu His Gln Lys Gly Thr Asn Leu His Asp Gly Ala Asn Gly Ile Thr
100 105 110

Glu Cys Pro Ile Pro Pro Lys Gly Gly Arg Lys Val Tyr Arg Phe Lys
115 120 125

20

Ala Gln Gln Tyr Gly Thr Ser Trp Tyr His Ser His Phe Ser Ala Gln
130 135 140

25

Tyr Gly Asn Gly Val Val Gly Ala Ile Gln Ile Asn Gly Pro Ala Ser
145 150 155 160

Leu Pro Tyr Asp Thr Asp Leu Gly Val Phe Pro Ile Ser Asp Tyr Tyr
165 170 175

30

Tyr Ser Ser Ala Asp Glu Leu Val Glu Leu Thr Lys Asn Ser Gly Ala
180 185 190

Pro Phe Ser Asp Asn Val Leu Phe Asn Gly Thr Ala Lys His Pro Glu
195 200 205

35

Thr Gly Glu Gly Glu Tyr Ala Asn Val Thr Leu Thr Pro Gly Arg Arg
210 215 220

40

His Arg Leu Arg Leu Ile Asn Thr Ser Val Glu Asn His Phe Gln Val
225 230 235 240

Ser Leu Val Asn His Thr Met Cys Ile Ile Ala Ala Asp Met Val Pro
245 250 255

19

	Val	Asn	Ala	Met	Thr	Val	Asp	Ser	Leu	Phe	Leu	Gly	Val	Gly	Gln	Arg	
				260					265						270		
5	Tyr	Asp	Val	Val	Ile	Glu	Ala	Asn	Arg	Thr	Pro	Gly	Asn	Tyr	Trp	Phe	
			275						280					285			
	Asn	Val	Thr	Phe	Gly	Gly	Gly	Leu	Leu	Cys	Gly	Gly	Ser	Arg	Asn	Pro	
			290					295					300				
10	Tyr	Pro	Ala	Ala	Ile	Phe	His	Tyr	Ala	Gly	Ala	Pro	Gly	Gly	Pro	Pro	
	305					310					315					320	
	Thr	Asp	Glu	Gly	Lys	Ala	Pro	Val	Asp	His	Asn	Cys	Leu	Asp	Leu	Pro	
					325					330					335		
15	Asn	Leu	Lys	Pro	Val	Val	Ala	Arg	Asp	Val	Pro	Leu	Ser	Gly	Phe	Ala	
				340					345					350			
	Lys	Arg	Ala	Asp	Asn	Thr	Leu	Asp	Val	Thr	Leu	Asp	Thr	Thr	Gly	Thr	
20			355					360					365				
	Pro	Leu	Phe	Val	Trp	Lys	Val	Asn	Gly	Ser	Ala	Ile	Asn	Ile	Asp	Trp	
		370					375					380					
25	Gly	Arg	Ala	Val	Val	Asp	Tyr	Val	Leu	Thr	Gln	Asn	Thr	Ser	Phe	Pro	
	385					390					395					400	
	Pro	Gly	Tyr	Asn	Ile	Val	Glu	Val	Asn	Gly	Ala	Asp	Gln	Trp	Ser	Tyr	
				405						410					415		
30	Trp	Leu	Ile	Glu	Asn	Asp	Pro	Gly	Ala	Pro	Phe	Thr	Leu	Pro	His	Pro	
				420					425					430			
	Met	His	Leu	His	Gly	His	Asp	Phe	Tyr	Val	Leu	Gly	Arg	Ser	Pro	Asp	
35			435					440					445				
	Glu	Ser	Pro	Ala	Ser	Asn	Glu	Arg	His	Val	Phe	Asp	Pro	Ala	Arg	Asp	
		450					455					460					
40	Ala	Gly	Leu	Leu	Ser	Gly	Ala	Asn	Pro	Val	Arg	Arg	Asp	Val	Ser	Met	
	465					470					475					480	
	Leu	Pro	Ala	Phe	Gly	Trp	Val	Val	Leu	Ser	Phe	Arg	Ala	Asp	Asn	Pro	
					485				490					495			

Gly Ala Trp Leu Phe His Cys His Ile Ala Trp His Val Ser Gly Gly
 500 505 510

5 Leu Gly Val Val Tyr Leu Glu Arg Ala Asp Asp Leu Arg Gly Ala Val
 515 520 525

10 Ser Asp Ala Asp Ala Asp Asp Leu Asp Arg Leu Cys Ala Asp Trp Arg
 530 535 540

Arg Tyr Trp Pro Thr Asn Pro Tyr Pro Lys Ser Asp Ser Gly Leu Lys
 545 550 555 560

15 His Arg Trp Val Glu Glu Gly Glu Trp Leu Val Lys Ala
 565 570

(2) INFORMATION FOR SEQ ID NO: 2:

(i) SEQUENCE CHARACTERISTICS:

- 20 (A) LENGTH: 616 amino acids
 (B) TYPE: amino acid
 (C) STRANDEDNESS:
 (D) TOPOLOGY: linear

25 (ii) MOLECULE TYPE: protein

30 (xi) SEQUENCE DESCRIPTION: SEQ ID NO: 2:

Met Lys Arg Phe Phe Ile Asn Ser Leu Leu Leu Ala Gly Leu Leu
 1 5 10 15

35 Asn Ser Gly Ala Leu Ala Ala Pro Ser Thr His Pro Arg Ser Asn Pro
 20 25 30

Asp Ile Leu Leu Glu Arg Asp Asp His Ser Leu Thr Ser Arg Gln Gly
 35 40 45

40 Ser Cys His Ser Pro Ser Asn Arg Ala Cys Trp Cys Ser Gly Phe Asp
 50 55 60

Ile Asn Thr Asp Tyr Glu Thr Lys Thr Pro Asn Thr Gly Val Val Arg

21

	65		70		75		80										
	Arg	Tyr	Thr	Phe	Asp	Ile	Thr	Glu	Val	Asp	Asn	Arg	Pro	Gly	Pro	Asp	
					85					90					95		
5	Gly	Val	Ile	Lys	Glu	Lys	Leu	Met	Leu	Ile	Asn	Asp	Lys	Leu	Leu	Gly	
					100					105					110		
10	Pro	Thr	Val	Phe	Ala	Asn	Trp	Gly	Asp	Thr	Ile	Glu	Val	Thr	Val	Asn	
					115					120					125		
	Asn	His	Leu	Arg	Thr	Asn	Gly	Thr	Ser	Ile	His	Trp	His	Gly	Leu	His	
					130					135					140		
15	Gln	Lys	Gly	Thr	Asn	Tyr	His	Asp	Gly	Ala	Asn	Gly	Val	Thr	Glu	Cys	
					145					150					155		160
	Pro	Ile	Pro	Pro	Gly	Gly	Ser	Arg	Val	Tyr	Ser	Phe	Arg	Ala	Arg	Gln	
					165					170					175		
20	Tyr	Gly	Thr	Ser	Trp	Tyr	His	Ser	His	Phe	Ser	Ala	Gln	Tyr	Gly	Asn	
					180					185					190		
	Gly	Val	Ser	Gly	Ala	Ile	Gln	Ile	Asn	Gly	Pro	Ala	Ser	Leu	Pro	Tyr	
25					195					200					205		
	Asp	Ile	Asp	Leu	Gly	Val	Leu	Pro	Leu	Xaa	Asp	Trp	Tyr	Tyr	Lys	Ser	
					210					215					220		
30	Ala	Asp	Gln	Leu	Val	Ile	Glu	Thr	Leu	Xaa	Lys	Gly	Asn	Ala	Pro	Phe	
					225					230					235		240
	Ser	Asp	Asn	Val	Leu	Ile	Asn	Gly	Thr	Ala	Lys	His	Pro	Thr	Thr	Gly	
					245					250					255		
35	Glu	Gly	Glu	Tyr	Ala	Ile	Val	Lys	Leu	Thr	Pro	Asp	Lys	Arg	His	Arg	
					260					265					270		
	Leu	Arg	Leu	Ile	Asn	Met	Ser	Val	Glu	Asn	His	Phe	Gln	Val	Ser	Leu	
40					275					280					285		
	Ala	Lys	His	Thr	Met	Thr	Val	Ile	Ala	Ala	Asp	Met	Val	Pro	Val	Asn	
					290					295					300		

Ala Met Thr Val Asp Ser Leu Phe Met Ala Val Gly Gln Arg Tyr Asp
305 310 315 320

5 Val Thr Ile Asp Ala Ser Gln Ala Val Gly Asn Tyr Trp Phe Asn Ile
325 330 335

Thr Phe Gly Gly Gln Gln Lys Cys Gly Phe Ser His Asn Pro Ala Pro
340 345 350

10 Ala Ala Ile Phe Arg Tyr Glu Gly Ala Pro Asp Ala Leu Pro Thr Asp
355 360 365

Pro Gly Ala Ala Pro Lys Asp His Gln Cys Leu Asp Thr Leu Asp Leu
370 375 380

15 Ser Pro Val Val Gln Lys Asn Val Pro Val Asp Gly Phe Val Lys Glu
385 390 395 400

Pro Gly Asn Thr Leu Pro Val Thr Leu His Val Asp Gln Ala Ala Ala
20 405 410 415

Pro His Val Phe Thr Trp Lys Ile Asn Gly Ser Ala Ala Asp Val Asp
420 425 430

25 Trp Asp Arg Pro Val Leu Glu Tyr Val Met Asn Asn Asp Leu Ser Ser
435 440 445

Ile Pro Val Lys Asn Asn Ile Val Arg Val Asp Gly Val Asn Glu Trp
30 450 455 460

Thr Tyr Trp Leu Val Glu Asn Asp Pro Glu Gly Arg Leu Ser Leu Pro
465 470 475 480

35 His Pro Met His Leu His Gly His Asp Phe Phe Val Leu Gly Arg Ser
485 490 495

Pro Asp Val Ser Pro Asp Ser Glu Thr Arg Phe Val Phe Asp Pro Ala
500 505 510

40 Val Asp Leu Pro Arg Leu Arg Gly His Asn Pro Val Arg Arg Asp Val
515 520 525

Thr Met Leu Pro Ala Arg Gly Trp Leu Leu Leu Ala Phe Arg Thr Asp
530 535 540

Asn Pro Gly Ala Trp Leu Phe His Cys His Ile Ala Xaa His Val Ser
545 550 555 560

5 Gly Gly Leu Ser Val Asp Phe Leu Glu Arg Pro Asp Glu Leu Arg Gly
565 570 575

Gln Leu Thr Gly Glu Ser Lys Ala Glu Leu Glu Arg Val Cys Arg Glu
580 585 590

10 Trp Lys Asp Trp Glu Ala Lys Ser Pro His Gly Lys Ile Asp Ser Gly
595 600 605

15 Leu Lys Gln Arg Arg Trp Asp Ala
610 615

CLAIMS

1. A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase activity, and increased oxidation potential and comprises a
5 mutation in a position corresponding to at least one of the following positions:
G511A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
T428A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
S510A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
10 D106A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
N109A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W,Q;
L500I,F,Y,W;
A108V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
G514A,V,P,L,I,F,Y,W;
15 wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1.

2. A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase
20 activity and an altered pH optimum and comprises a mutation in a position corresponding to at least one of the following positions:
192-193;
234-236;
25 269;
293-294;
364-365;
372-373;
426-433;
30 503-513;

wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1.

35 3. A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase activity and an altered mediator efficiency and comprises a mutation in a position corresponding to at least one of the

following positions:

185-194;

235;

293-294;

5 365-373;

427-429;

505;

507-508;

510-511;

10 wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1.

4. A variant of a parent laccase, which variant has laccase
15 activity and an altered O₂/OH-pathway and comprises a mutation in a position corresponding to at least one of the following positions:

A506E;

N109D;

20 H93E;

H95E;

M433E;

M480E;

wherein the parent laccase has the amino acid sequence given in
25 SEQ ID No. 1 or the parent laccase has an amino acid sequence which is at least 80% homologous to SEQ ID No. 1.

5. A variant according to any of claims 1-4, wherein the parent laccase is derived from *Myceliophthora*.

30

6. A variant according to any of claims 1-4, wherein the parent laccase is derived from *Scytalidium*.

7. A variant according to claim 5, wherein the parent laccase
35 is a *Scytalidium thermophilum* laccase with the sequence ID No. 2.

8. A DNA construct comprising a DNA sequence encoding a laccase variant according to any of claims 1-7.
9. A recombinant expression vector which carries a DNA construct according to claim 8.
10. A cell which is transformed with a DNA construct according to claim 8 or a vector according to claim 9.
- 10 11. A cell according to claim 10, which is a microorganism.
12. A cell according to claim 11, which is a bacterium or a fungus.
- 15 13. A cell according to claim 12, which is an *Aspergillus niger* or an *Aspergillus oryzae* cell.
14. Use of a laccase variant according to any of claims 1-7 for oxidizing a substrate.
- 20 15. Use of a laccase variant according to any of claims 1-7 for dye transfer inhibition.
16. Use of a laccase variant according to any of claims 1-7 for
25 bleaching textiles, in particular for bleaching denim.
17. A detergent additive comprising a laccase variant according to any of claims 1-7 in the form of a non-dusting granulate, a stabilised liquid or a protected enzyme.
- 30 18. A detergent additive according to claim 17, which additionally comprises one or more other enzyme such as a protease, a lipase, an amylase, and/or a cellulase.
- 35 19. A detergent composition comprising a laccase variant according to any of claims 1-7 and a surfactant.

20. A detergent composition according to claim 19 which additionally comprises one or more other enzymes such as a protease, a lipase, an amylase and/or a cellulase.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/DK 98/00067

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC6: C12N 9/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC6: C12N

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

SE,DK,FI,NO classes as above

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

WPI, CA, BIOSIS

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
P,X	WO 9709431 A1 (NOVO NORDISK BIOTECH, INC.), 13 March 1997 (13.03.97), see claims 20, 26-30 --	2,5
Y	WO 9533836 A1 (NOVO NORDISK BIOTECH, INC.), 14 December 1995 (14.12.95) --	1-5,8-20
Y	WO 9533837 A1 (NOVO NORDISK BIOTECH, INC.), 14 December 1995 (14.12.95) --	1-4,6-20
Y	WO 9511296 A1 (DEGUSSA AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT), 27 April 1995 (27.04.95), see abstract --	1-20

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance: the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

27 May 1998

Date of mailing of the international search report

17-06-1998

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/DK 98/00067

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	The Journal of Biological Chemistry, Volume 263, No 2, January 1988, Ursula A. Germann et al, "Characterization of Two Allelic Forms of Neurospora crassa Laccase. Amino- and carboxyl-terminal processing of a precursor" page 885 - page 896 --	1-20
Y	The Journal of Biological Chemistry, Volume 265, No 25, Sept 1990, Yasushi Kojima et al, "Cloning, Sequence Analysis, and Expression of Ligninolytic Phenoloxidase Genes of the White-rot Basidiomycete Coriolus hirsutus", page 15224 - page 15230 --	1-20
A	Biochimica et Biophysica Acta, Volume 1292, 1996, Feng Xu et al, "A study of a series of recombinant fungal laccases and bilirubin oxidase that exhibit significant differences in redox potential, substrate specificity, and stability", page 303 - page 311, see abstract -- -----	1-20

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/DK 98/00067

Box I Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of Item 1 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box II Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of Item 2 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see next sheet

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☒ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/DK 98/00067

According to rule 13.2, an international application shall relate to one invention only or a group of inventions linked by one or more of the same or corresponding "special technical features" i.e. features that define a contribution which each of the inventions makes over prior art.

A search for this "special technical feature" mentioned in PCT Rule 13.2 among the independent claims did not reveal such a unifying technical feature.

According the following inventions were found:

- 1) Claim 1 and part of claims 5-20 directed to a laccase variant havin an increased oxidation potential
- 2) Claim 2 and part of claims 5-20 directed to a laccase variant having an altered pH optimum
- 3) Claim 3 and part of claims 5-20 directed to a laccase variant having an altered mediator efficiency
- 4) Claim 4 and part of claims 5-20 directed to a laccase variant having an altered O₂/OH-pathway.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

29/04/98

International application No.
PCT/DK 98/00067

Patent document cited in search report			Publication date	Patent family member(s)		Publication date
WO	9709431	A1	13/03/97	AU	7154096 A	27/03/97
WO	9533836	A1	14/12/95	AU	2656595 A	04/01/96
				CA	2191718 A	14/12/95
				EP	0765394 A	02/04/97
				FI	964808 A	02/12/96
				JP	10501137 T	03/02/98
WO	9533837	A1	14/12/95	AU	2656695 A	04/01/96
				EP	0763115 A	19/03/97
WO	9511296	A1	27/04/95	AU	7938294 A	08/05/95
				EP	0724629 A	07/08/96
				JP	9504426 T	06/05/97

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